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THE WRONGED DAUGHTER

ASPECTS OF CINDERELLA

Marina Warner

In Gian Battista Basíle's *Pentamerone*, a collection of stories published in 1634–36 in Naples under the title *Lo cunto de li cunti, The Tale of Tales*, the Neapolitan historian and folklorist wrote a version of one of the most familiar fairy tales in Europe. His story is called "*L'Arza*" or "*L'Ursa*," "The She-Bear," and it begins:

"There was once a King of Roccaspra who had for his wife the very mother of beauty, but he lost her early, for in the gallop of life she fell from the horse of health and broke her life . . ." (Basíle has an irrepressible love of extended and outlandish metaphor).

The couple have a daughter, who is called Preziosa, Precious. On her deathbed, her mother demands on the pain of horrible curses that her husband should never marry again, unless he finds "another woman as beautiful as I have been."

He swears; she dies; he rails with grief and weeps rivers of tears. But, as Basíle says—and he was a cynic in a city that made cynicism an essential of survival—"the ache of a widower is like the ache in the funny bone, sharp, but brief." The king soon begins looking around for a new wife to replace his beloved and give him an heir—a son. He holds a contest and has candidates summoned from the four quarters; but none will do. National stereotypes seem already in place, for he dismisses the German as "cold and icy," the Frenchwoman as lightheaded and the Venetian "with her bleached hair" for loving luxury overmuch. Then the thought strikes him, "Why should I seek [high and low] when Preziosa, my daughter, is made in the same form as her mother? I have this lovely face by me at home, and yet I go to the ends of the earth to find another?"

He puts the matter to the girl, but she reproaches him bitterly. He explodes: "Make up your mind to tie the marriage knot this very night; for otherwise your ear will be the biggest bit left of you!" When Preziosa hears this, she goes to her room in desperation and "suddenly" an old

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woman, a servant who "used to bring her mercury" for her toilette, appears and comforts her. She gives Preziosa a little stick and tells her to put it in her mouth when her father "wants to play the part of a stallion, though there's more of the *ass* in him." She promises her, "You will then immediately become a bear, and can run away. . . ."

The wedding feast takes place that night; the bride is summoned to her father's bed; then she does as the old woman told her, and escapes from her terrified father in the shape of a bear. As she wanders the forest in this disguise, she is spotted by a prince and captured. One day in the palace gardens, the prince sees a young woman in the bear's den combing her golden hair. Preziosa the She-Bear has taken the stick out of her mouth and become a girl again, thinking no one was looking. The prince falls in love with the mysterious stranger and, after many vicissitudes, discovers that she and the bear are one and the same, and marries her. The prince's mother, on hearing Preziosa's story, extols her as a good, virtuous girl. Basíle concludes, "Thus Preziosa was the sounding rod to the balance of human judgment, which declares that 'To those who do good, good always comes.' "

Some of the elements in this happy and reassuring story—the disguised princess whose virtue and beauty are acknowledged and rewarded by union with a prince, after an older woman has helped her escape her troubles—are recognizable and relate Basíle's "*L'Ursa*" to the Cinderella cycle of folk tales. But the story differs in obvious ways from the classic version told by Charles Perrault in his collection of around 1697, sixty years later than Basíle. Perrault's Cinderella is not wronged by her father, but by her stepmother and stepsisters. Basíle also collected a Cinderella story proper, "*La Gatta Cenerentola*," "The Hearth Cat." In his version, Zezolla rebels against her stepmother and, conspiring with her governess, kills her by dropping the lid of a trunk on her head. The governess duly marries Zezolla's father, as she and the girl had planned, but within a month, she is treating her stepdaughter worse than her predecessor did. Moreover, she suddenly introduces into the household her own children, whose existence she had kept secret until this point: not just two sisters for Zezolla, but *six*. In the final scene, however, with the help of her

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dead mother's magic and a lost slipper, Zezolla triumphs. Basíle draws this fatalistic moral: "He is mad who would oppose the stars."

Basíle's spirited account of a young woman's success achieved against the odds is the first version of Cinderella published in Europe; it seems, from the internal evidence, that Perrault knew Basíle's collection. The alterations he made, in the light of retellings he himself had heard, are eloquent in themselves: his Cinderella heroine has much of the She-Bear's sweetness of character, less of the minx portrayed in Basíle's Hearth Cat. However, Perrault did not neglect the tale of the She-Bear, of the incestuous father and the daughter he wrongs. He included a version of it in verse, called *Peau d'âne, Donkeyskin*, and it remains the least reproduced tale from Perrault's much-reproduced volume. "Donkeyskin" resembles Basíle's "She-Bear" very closely, except that the heroine assumes her disguise with the help of a true fairy, not just a wise woman skilled in cosmetic preparations, and flies from her father before the wedding. At the fairy's suggestion, she wraps herself in the stinking pelt of an ass and takes work in the pigsty of a neighboring prince's castle.

A beautiful, noble young woman living in disguise in some menial and slatternly capacity is recognized by a prince and escapes from her servitude through marriage: this version of the fairy tale seems the earliest known in Europe. According to Marian Cox, the folklorist who at the turn of the century collected three hundred forty-five variants of the Cinderella story, a sermon of 1501 given in Strasbourg referred to the tale "Ass-Hide"; another collection mentions it in 1550; and Bonaventure des Périers, writing in the 1570s in a book about pastimes and emblems entitled another variation on the story "Of a young girl named Ass-Hide and how she got married with the help of little ants." It is also sometimes called "Reed-Cap" or "Cap-O'Rushes" after the heroine's coat of grasses; its Scottish version, collected by Andrew Lang in Morayshire in 1890 as "Rushen Coatie," is slowly returning to the canon of children's stories.

When the heroine takes flight from the sexual advances of her father, she is willingly bound by a spell; her disguise in animal or beggarly shape constitutes a kind of enchant-

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ment that keeps her hidden from her would-be seducer; it changes her problematic fleshly envelope, the inspiration of untoward desire, until the elect awakener of desire can appear. The disguise degrades her: the animals the various fairy-tale protagonists change into are not seemly or entrancing, not fawns nor birds, but hairy, rough, wild, fierce—in short, beasts. The cat, tame as it is, has associations with wildness even by the side of the domestic hearth.

The wronged daughter takes creaturely shape and keeps company with creatures. Lowly, usually female, animals help her—ants, calves, sheep. In some of the most appealing of these folk tales, the heroine's dead mother returns in animal shape to work magic on her behalf. The beasts who befriend her become her kin, and their presence, as disguises or as helpmeets, conveys a deeper meaning about the heroine's condition. In the midst of repudiating a crime she finds abhorrent and which excites her bitter reproaches and confusion, the Cinderella-style heroine assumes an animal form that simultaneously seals her connection with nature and splits her from the society in which such unnatural connections as father–daughter marriage can be proposed and even take place with official ceremony and due process. The change of appearance puts her out into the wilderness. And in that wilderness, her disguises reflect the traditional iconography of the very passions that she flees.

After Adam and Eve had eaten of the fruit of knowledge, they covered their nakedness and marked their fallen condition with coats of skins, as in the twelfth-century mosaics of Monreale. Voluptas, in a thirteenth-century sculpture from Freiburg Cathedral, wears a full goatskin with head and hooves hanging over her nakedness to connote her lewdness. Hirsuteness belongs to satyrs, the classical embodiments of carnal passion. Like the ass and the goat, they figure in conventional medieval representations of diabolical lust, as in the thirteenth-century sculpture of the vice *Luxuria* at Chartres Cathedral. In engravings from the period of the first explicit references to "Ass-Hide," the metaphor of animal nature recurs in images of outcasts and anomalies. Jacopo de' Barbari's *Satyr Family* (c. 1503–4) shows the mother with furry thighs, giving suck to her baby while her priapic husband serenades her. In spite of

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his cultivated entertainment, he appears with cloven feet, shaggy nether parts, goat's horns and erect penis—all traditional signs of the devil and of the devil's offspring, the Vices. In Mantegna's complex allegorical painting *The Vices Expelled from the Garden of the Virtues* (1502), the evil followers of Venus, including their babes in arms, also appear hairy and hooved. In Pisanello's drawing of *Luxuria*, she is shown lying on a fur. Medusa-like ringlets flare and rear around her face, and beside her there's a rabbit, a creature associated with concupiscence. (She's the precursor of the many centerfolds who appear with animal skins around them.) Since the Middle Ages, the devil himself has conventionally had a furry face. Saint Jerome translated the demons of Isaiah as *pilosi*, the hairy ones, in the Vulgate version of the Old Testament.

The hairiness motif returns in traditional images of saints who have repented a worldly and pleasure-loving life. Mary Magdalene wears what appears to be a coat of skins to symbolize her putting off the soft apparel of her days as a whore; in fact, her own hair grows miraculously to preserve her in modesty from head to toe after she has retired, naked, to the desert. In many sequences that tell the story of her expiation, she can receive communion from a priest without giving offence because she is clothed in her own hair. Donatello's famous statue of Mary Magdalene, in the Baptistery in Florence, could easily be mistaken for Saint John the Baptist, another ascetic who leaves the world, so thickly carved are the tresses of her hair: John the Baptist usually wears animal skins. In the fifteenth-century sculpture from the chapel at Châteaudun on the Loire, his ass hide falls in folds, still attached to the ass's head.

Martin Schongauer, the Augsburg goldsmith who engraved some of the most exquisite devotional images of the fifteenth century, also designed devices for coats of arms. Like the bear and the unicorn, the wild man, or wodehouse, and the wild woman, his wife, were popular motifs in medieval heraldry. Before his death in 1491, Schongauer engraved a wild woman sitting with her baby at her breast. A maiden with a sweet demeanor and long, fair, wavy hair, she is covered in a coat of fur all over. It would be pressing the argument too hard to present her as Donkeyskin herself; it is striking, however, that at a time when tales were

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circulating about young girls disguised as animals in order to escape desires they found repugnant, the figure of the hairy girl stood not for the rejection of sexuality, but the condition of it. The She-Bear and Donkeyskin wear the pelts of beasts because their father's outrage has violated and contaminated them, and although they have suffered wrong in innocence, they accept the taint and enact it on their own persons. At the same time, their father's unlawful demand has opened their eyes to the choice they must make now that they are nubile women. The animal skins they put on and the insults they bear anticipate the pollution of virginity's loss. Basíle's and Perrault's stories capture the difficulties of a young woman entering a sexual life in a social context where the pattern of sinful woman is Eve and the pattern of goodness is Mary, the virgin.

Perrault's traditional, apparently well-mannered and dainty retelling of the Cinderella story actually points to the sexual innuendoes with more clarity than any of the raunchier renditions. This heroine's nickname is Cucendron, *Cinder-bottom*, and the kinder of the two sisters softens it to Cendrillon to spare her.

The crux that links the Cinderella and Donkeyskin stories is the heroine's disguise in hideous and repellent form: Cinderella is dirty, and her fundamental loveliness and attractions are concealed under the dirt and rags and marks of toil. Her looks aren't *changed* later by the fairy godmother's magic, rather revealed; her mask slips, the prince does not see someone different at the ball, he sees the true beauty, who has "come out," acknowledged her state and put aside her disguise. This is why, in popular imagery, Cinderella remains equally lovely, whether in rags or riches. The prince recognizes her only when *she* decides to let herself show.

There's another story linked to the Donkeyskin group which predates the written versions of Basíle and Perrault. Philippe de Beaumanoir's *La Manékine*, a thirteenth-century novel in verse, tells of the tribulations of a heroine called Joie. She finds her father's designs upon her so appalling that she picks up a kitchen knife "big enough to shear the spine of a swan in half" and cuts off her left hand. It falls into the moat of her father's castle. When he sees her mutilated, he spurns her—the connotations of lost in-

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tegrity run very strongly through the text at this point—and orders that she should be burned. His seneschal takes pity on her and sets her adrift in a rudderless boat, returning with the heart of an animal to prove his murder. After many adventures, Joie lands on the coast of Scotland and eventually marries the king. She suffers many further ordeals, at the hands of her wicked mother-in-law, but one day a fish is brought into the kitchen in preparation for a meal, and lo! her hand is found inside it and miraculously restored to her.

The folklorist Alan Dundes has commented that *La Manékine*, the Maid-Without-Hands in the later version by the brothers Grimm, reveals most openly the sexual fears of the heroine latent in the other stories: this victim-heroine actually severs her own hands, the instruments of knowledge and pleasure and activity and exploration.

The heroine does not always resort to such horrendous devices when she refuses her father. Self-mutilation is replaced sometimes by muteness. Another version of the tale, related by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *History of the Kings of Britain* (around 1136), sheds a most interesting light on the famous reworking by Shakespeare in *King Lear*. Geoffrey gave the tale in a form Shakespeare probably knew, though his immediate sources were the contemporary play *King Leir* and Holinshed's *Chronicles*: there was once a king of Britain who was a widower and, feeling himself nearing the end of his life, called his daughters to him and asked how much they loved him. The elder two professed their boundless love and service to their father; but the youngest only replied that she loved him as meat loves salt. For this seemingly frugal show of affection, the king banished her; years later, himself reduced to beggary by the neglect of those elder daughters, he wanders in to a wedding feast. He does not recognize the bride, his youngest child, but she sees through his rags and orders that all the food in the wedding banquet be cooked without salt. The guests, tasting the savorless meal, refuse to eat it; the old king weeps, remembering his daughter's words and realizing that as food is nothing without salt, so her love was genuine and her nature true. She then reveals herself to him and restores him to his dignity.

No such outcome in *King Lear*, of course, and Shake-

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speare did not use the image of food without salt, but the opening scene of his tragedy follows the essential prelude of the youngest daughter's fate, emphasizing that the avowals Lear is soliciting exceed the permitted relation between father and daughter. After Goneril and Regan—those recognizable ugly sisters of the tragic stage—have made their extravagant and hollow protestations of undying love and Lear has invested them with land and goods, two thirds of his kingdom, Lear turns to Cordelia:

> Now, our joy,
> Although our last, not least . . . Speak.

Cordelia has pledged herself to silence, and she says only one word, "Nothing." Lear rages. "Nothing will come of nothing . . ." She then speaks of her speechlessness:

> Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
> My heart into my mouth.

And she makes a discreet profession:

> I love your Majesty
> According to my bond, nor more, nor less.

Goaded by Lear, who still cannot believe what he hears, she elaborates on the differences between the love of a wife and the love of a daughter:

> You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
> Return those duties back as are right fit,
> Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
> Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
> They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
> That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
> Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
> Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
> To love my father all.

Lear falls into such a rage at these words that he curses Cordelia, strips her of her birthright and gives her share to her sisters, though he adds, "I lov'd her most . . . ."

He opens his curse, "Let truth be thy dower," and, of

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course, Cordelia shines out of Shakespeare's heroines as a pattern of womanly heroism, grace and devotion. Lear is reconciled to her, and at the end, finds her hanged in a tragic culmination that entirely transforms the character of Geoffrey's satisfying morality. Lear says,

> Her voice was ever soft,
> Gentle and low; an excellent thing in woman.

In "The Three Caskets" (1912), Freud commented on the relationship between Cordelia and Cinderella. "Cordelia makes herself unrecognizable, inconspicuous like lead [the lowest of metals], she remains dumb, she loves and is silent. Cinderella hides so that she cannot be found. We may perhaps be allowed to equate concealment and dumbness. . . ." Freud goes on to identify Cordelia-Cinderella with the goddess of death, herself disguised in the form of the goddess of love and beauty, and concludes the short paper movingly: "It is vain that an old man yearns for the love of woman as he had it first from his mother; the third of the Fates alone, the silent Goddess of Death, will take him into her arms."

We do not have to follow Freud that far in his identification with the figures of great and tragic old men, Lear and Oedipus, and perceive Anna Freud, his devoted daughter, in the role of his Cordelia and Antigone; we do not have to accept that love and beauty personified by a young girl shield mortality itself; if we return to the story from the point of view of the female protagonist, we can interpret metaphorically the death of which Freud speaks and take it as the closure of a certain period in her life, her death to the past of her childhood. The child can protest that she loves her father all; but the wise young woman, who has become aware of her eligibility and stands on the threshold of marriage, knows that her bond to her father has limits, that husbands or lovers will take a measure of the love that in innocence she might have once given to her father.

Around the time *King Lear* was first produced, 1608, Shakespeare was writing *Pericles*. It opens with the crime of Antiochus, a king who is in love with his daughter and who wants to keep her for himself and prevent her, by extreme means, from marrying anyone else. It is not push-

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ing the evidence to claim that Shakespeare, as the father of daughters, was preoccupied at this stage in his life with the restrictions of lawful love, and was noticing fables and stories in the community of knowledge on which he drew that illuminated this perplexing and painful human tie.

In *Pericles*, Shakespeare's source, Gower, the author of the *Confessio Amantis*, appears on stage as the chorus and delivers the prologue about incest; as the play develops, the fairy-tale elements that relate it to the Cinderella group are dispersed between two characters, on the one hand the incestuous daughter who remains anonymous and disappears from view, and, on the other, Marina, the gentle, good daughter of the virtuous Pericles, who suffers at the hands of a vicious foster mother until her recovery, recognition and reunion with her father.

The cross-pollination of stories from folklore, history, drama and exempla does not itself throw light on the different stratagems young women have adopted to disentangle themselves from extreme family claims. Certain aspects of their struggle emerge, however, from synchronic comparison. Animal disguise, animal metamorphosis or menial dress, controlled until the moment has come to make the act of self-revelation, form the prelude to *marriage* in the folk tales collected by Basíle and Perrault; in the related stories of saints, weddings take place, after torture and martyrdom, only with the Son of Heaven as bridegroom. Saints do not accept change into animal shape or put on animal disguise to escape male demands that they accept a sexual life, nor do any resign themselves or even invite insults with sexual innuendoes by appearing animal-like or dirty. Yet they do wittingly demean themselves, fleeing luxuries of city and courts and the rich men who propose themselves as spouses. And in one case, that of Saint Uncumber, hairiness returns as a motif.

Saint Uncumber was the daughter of a pagan king of Portugal and he wanted her to marry another non-Christian; but she had secretly converted to Christianity and pledged herself to a life of virginity in the love of Christ. When she realizes that she is going to have to submit to her father's authority, she prays for help, and immediately a beard grows on her face. When the suitor

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sees the match he is being offered, he declines. Uncumber's father, in a rage at her insubordination, has his daughter crucified.

The hairiness round the saint's mouth, with the reminiscence of the nether female "mouth" and its aureole of hair, makes an open declaration of the lustfulness inside woman that Uncumber acknowledges only to resist and refuse. In Memling's painting in Bruges, the golden wisps are discreetly visible on her chin.

In folklore, sympathy with the beasts foreshadows a marriage; in the hagiography, it leads to a life of prolonged chastity, consummated in death. The legend of Saint Dympna, or Dymphna, might have provided one immediate source for *Peau d'âne* by Perrault, according to Perrault's historian, Marc Soriano, together with Basíle's She-Bear. Dympna was a seventh-century princess, the daughter of a king of Brittany, Britain or Ireland, and of a Christian mother who died when she was a child. Her likeness to her mother as she grew up inspired "an unlawful passion" in her father, who declared his desire to marry her. Dympna then consulted her confessor, Saint Gerebernus, and together with the court fool and his wife, they took flight and sailed across the Channel to Antwerp. There Dympna divested herself of her worldly status and, making her way into the forest, became a hermit with the faithful Gerebernus still by her side. She thus secluded herself in a forest hut, but did not take employment with pigs or other beasts, unlike her sisters in legend who are the marrying kind. In her absence, her father's passion did not abate; he sent after her, and when he found her, followed her to her hideaway and repeated his demand. She refused, and he ordered his men to kill her and her priest. They obeyed, in the case of Saint Gerebernus, but could not bear to touch Dympna. So her father beheaded her himself.

Saint Dympna's shrine at Gheel, in Belgium, was attracting pilgrims by the late thirteenth century, after the bodies of Dympna and Gerebernus were discovered; her relics were eventually housed in the collegiate church, begun around 1450, which was dedicated to her name. The reliquary, recast in 1613 by the silversmith Guillaume Jacques of Antwerp, contains remains that brought about numerous cures, of epileptics, schizophrenics and other mentally sick

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pilgrims, who were brought to the shrine to perform a novena. Gradually a hospice grew up to house the patients during the nine days when they returned regularly to the saint's relics and crawled under an arch below the sarcophagus in penance; Saint Dympna was declared patron saint of the insane, and the town of Gheel became an open asylum for the mentally ill, and still practices home care for the sick, who are lodged with the families in the town. Because of the mad rage of her father, who killed what he most loved, the pilgrims who were drawn to Dympna's cult gave her the sick in the head to look after. It's an interesting aspect of the human compassion and understanding in the medieval past that incest and filicide and madness were seen to be so very closely connected.

In her cult statue in Gheel, Saint Dympna is represented crushing a monster under her feet with a sword in her hand. Beast in body, goat-horned, with long canines and a tail, the monster represents the demon who took possession of her father and resembles the other furry personifications of satyriasis. Like many virgin martyrs, Dympna carries the weapon that won her the crown of martyrdom and holds chained the sin of her father—incarnate in devilish form. As a conqueror of concupiscence, Dympna has many counterparts: Saint Catherine of Alexandria, a saint with a popular following throughout Europe at the time Dympna's own cult was becoming established, is traditionally depicted with the prostrated body of the Emperor Maxentius under her feet. In a dispute over the finer points of philosophy, she trounced him—a pagan—with her superior Christian wisdom. Maxentius also pursued her licentiously, and in altarpieces, manuscript illuminations and statues of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, his sprawling form bears witness to the power of her virginity. In the Old Testament, Judith was the pattern of female virtue overcoming vice, for she killed the tyrant Holofernes when he was on fire with love for her; in the Donatello sculpture, which stood outside the Signoria or Town Hall in Florence, the inscription drew the moral very sharply: "Kingdoms fall through licence, cities rise through virtue." Holofernes slumps in death on a pillow, a sign of his lust and, by its luxuriousness, of the absence of virtue in him. Saint Margaret of Antioch, who suffered unwanted attentions from a

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lascivious Roman prefect, holds a dragon leashed; in the related legend of Pelagia, one of the favorite saints of the Orthodox Church, this repentant *fille de joie* also keeps a demon at her side like a pet.

"A closer study of folk tales would teach us what we can still expect from the world," wrote Elias Canetti forty years ago. On the other hand, Robert Darnton, writing about Perrault, has commented: "Folk tales are historical documents. They have evolved over many centuries and have taken different turns in different cultural traditions. Far from expressing the unchanging operations of man's inner being, they suggest that *mentalités* themselves have changed. . . ." These two statements—Canetti's pointing to the universals embedded in folk tales, Darnton's indicating the fluctuating historical particulars recorded by them—propose different lines of enquiry. In a cluster of stories—hagiography and fairy tale—there recurs a figure of a wronged daughter, a young woman in flight from the unwelcome desire of a man, who is her own father or otherwise a man in power, an emperor, a prefect, a tyrant. Taking the first, universalist line of approach, the trope may yield a common truth about young women growing up and family fantasies, fathers' and daughters'. But the questions raised lead to the thorny thickets of Freud's theory of the unconscious and to the incest fantasy, and, in the short space of this article, there is a greater possibility of discovering something about the fairy-tale princess if the historical context of the fairy tales and its particularities are borne in mind.

The Donkeyskin group of fairy tales mirrors the legal and religious subjection of daughters to their father's authority with polished accuracy. The legend of Saint Barbara, for instance, may serve to illustrate a social interpretation of the material as resistance to patriarchal power and exogamous marriage. Christine de Pisan, the humanist poet and historian, wrote down many stories of virgin martyrs and heroines like Catherine of Alexandria and Judith in her rebuttal of misogyny, *The Book of the City of Ladies* of 1405. She writes of Saint Barbara: "Because of her beauty, her father had her shut up in a tower. . . . [He] sought a noble marriage for her, but she refused all offers for a long time. Finally she declared herself a Chris-

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tian and dedicated her virginity to God. *For this reason her father tried to kill her*, but she was able to escape and flee. And when her father pursued her to put her to death, he finally found her, and brought her before the prefect, who ordered her to be executed with excruciating tortures . . ." (emphasis added). After appalling cruelties, which Barbara resists with miraculous strength, her father, as in the case of Dympna, beheads her himself.

Saint Barbara is the patron saint of thunder and lightning and the protector of gunners, because as he was returning home from his crime, her father was struck down by a thunderbolt and reduced to ashes.

Christine mentions that Barbara's father wanted a *noble* marriage, that the prefect ordered the torture because she had disobeyed her father. Unlike the legend of Dympna, which focuses on incest, Barbara's concentrates on authority; Barbara's refusal makes a bid for autonomy. The folk tales in which a daughter resists her father and is then punished may also contain memories of actual violation; but the narrative is often presented in such a way, as in *King Lear*, that the independent integrity of the victim becomes the issue, not her chastity. The stories focus on the heroine revolting against her father from a moral position that can be entirely justified. By portraying the father exceeding what Cordelia calls their "bond," the rebel becomes a virtuous heroine rather than an unfilial daughter. The father's act is an outrage precisely because daughters in general were held in such close subjection to their fathers and decreed to obey them by the fourth commandment. To be vindicated, the daughter must be wronged; her father must either transgress the universally held taboo against incest, or try to force a pagan husband on a Christian girl.

The *Croyland Chronicle*, written during the Wars of the Roses in England, gives historical evidence that when such pressure was put upon young marriageable women by men in authority over them, stratagems were adopted that echo the motifs of the fairy tales. The monk at Croyland, writing in 1471 about the ambitions of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the future Richard III, says that when he showed a desire to marry Lady Anne, daughter of the Earl of Warwick and the heiress to a great estate, his brother the Duke

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of Clarence tried to prevent the match, because he was married to Anne's elder sister and he feared—rightly as it turned out—that Richard had designs on her portion of the fortune as well. "Such being the case, he caused the damsel to be concealed, in order that it might not be known by his brother where she was. . . . Still however the craftiness of the Duke of Gloucester [Richard] so far prevailed that he discovered the young lady in the City of London disguised in the habit of a cookmaid; upon which he had her removed to the sanctuary of Saint Martin's . . ." Here, in Lady Anne Warwick, Richard III's queen, we find a real-life girl who flees from an abhorred union by disguising herself as a servant. The chronicler talks of her as a pawn in the hands of great men; but it is possible that she was a willing accomplice.

I believe, though the point cannot be proven, that such legends are stories by women: it was no accident that Perrault called his collection *Mother Goose Tales*, recalling the custom of the *veillée*, when storytellers—who were often women—gathered an audience by the fire to listen. And it is because these are women's stories that the protagonists—the martyr saints—have particular care for women's interests: Catherine was chosen by young unmarried women in France as their special patron in the Middle Ages; Margaret was invoked in pregnancy because the dragon who swallowed her brought her up again safe and sound; Agatha, another saint who was martyred rather than submit to an unwanted marriage, was the patron saint of nursing mothers because her breasts were torn off during her torture; and Saint Wilgefortis, or the "Strong Virgin," the *Virgo fortis*, otherwise known in translation as Santa Liberata, Sainte Débarras or Saint Uncumber, became the saint who helped wives disencumber themselves from unwanted husbands.

The dissemination of fairy tales and saints' lives has coincided with a softening and sweetening of the character of the Beast whom the heroine flees, as in the much more popular French fairy tale, *Beauty and the Beast. Donkeyskin* has proved the least-known of Perrault's tales; the Catholic martyr stories for many complex reasons are no longer related with the intense admiration that Christine de Pisan—who was no credulous masochist—brought to

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their retelling. The ferocious father, the lustful suitor, have metamorphosed or even disappeared; the Cinderella story we are familiar with now portrays the father as virtuous and dead, or weak and henpecked, the lovable Baron Hardup of the Victorian pantomime. Cinderella radiates feelings of dutiful and tender loyalty; she no longer hides from the prince either, but runs away from the ball only because the spell is broken at midnight, a stroke of fate which Perrault introduced into the tradition.

In this respect, as well as in many others, the history of Joan of Arc's cult coincides with the development of the Cinderella-type story. The historical Joan of Arc ran away from home disguised as a boy or, more particularly, as a soldier; she identified her voices as Saint Michael, the warrior archangel, and Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, both of whom refused marriage. Margaret, furthermore, in one of the variations of her legend, entered a monastery disguised as a monk and was discovered to be a woman only on her deathbed. The analogies between Joan of Arc and the armed maiden Judith were recognized by hagiographers soon after Joan's exploits on the battlefield. Christine de Pisan, who hardly mentioned any contemporaries in her praises of women, broke the silence of her old age to write a poem in celebration of Joan after the victory over the English at Orléans in 1429; in it she compared Joan favorably with all sorts of figures from antiquity and the Bible, including Judith. Fifty years after Joan's death, Martin le Franc's book *Le champion des dames* portrayed Joan and Judith side by side in the same miniature. The trial of Joan of Arc reveals that the similarities between the virgin saints' stories and the runaway or disguised heroines of fairy tales arose from similar circumstances at home. There were tensions in the d'Arc household at Domrémy. Joan declared at her trial: "Her mother and father took great pains to keep her, and held her in great subjection; and she obeyed them in everything, except in the case at Toul about the marriage." For Joan—as is not very well advertised by her more pious devotees—was summoned for breach of promise at the local cathedral town when she refused to marry the man chosen for her by her father. She tells the story and then adds that her father said to her brothers, "If I thought that it would come to pass as I fear

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regarding my daughter [if she joined the army as she said she wanted] I should like you to drown her, and if you did not do so, I would drown her myself." Joan of Arc thus gives evidence of the violent, even murderous reaction of a father when his authority over her erotic life is challenged, exactly as in the numerous stories from legend and fairy tale. It was immediately after recalling this episode that Joan retorted at her trial that she had dressed as a man "by herself, of her own accord, and not at the request of any man alive." Disguise—in this case, male haircut and costume—became for Joan of Arc the means of escape from parental control and from a sexual life.

Fairy tales have been established as children's literature *par excellence*. During the course of the nineteenth century, numerous versions, both printed and performed, in pantomime, ballet, opera and, in this century, on film, have adapted medieval stories to edifying contemporary ideas. The enormous popular cult of Joan of Arc began to peak after the publication of the trial in modern French in 1869; and an interesting exchange between history and legend shapes the representation of the respective heroines in the pedagogical literature. Cinderella's story is frequently set in the Middle Ages; the prince's castle is turreted, fortified, pinnacled in a paraphrase of the castles in *Les très riches heures*; the courtiers, by contrast to Cinderella in her rags, wear doublets and hose, cloaks, wimples, velvets and the extravagant headdresses and shoes, the hennins and poulaines of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a time of such high fashion that the clergy continually lamented its vanities. Joan of Arc's simple peasant rags in early twentieth-century illustrations, like Frank Schoonover's for *The Maid of Orléans* by Lucy Foster Madison (1918), anticipate the stock costume of Cinders, the homespun and apron which Walt Disney disseminated throughout the world. Joan of Arc's voices come as the fairy godmother comes, to make the heroine's wishes come true. Such correspondences might result from a pleasant and harmless cross-fertilization of medievalizing imagery with no special significance, if it weren't for one recurring aspect of the heroine's appearance: her blond hair.

Blondness and beauty have provided a conceptual rhyme in visual and literary imagery ever since the god-

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dess of love's tresses were described as *xanthe*, golden, by Homer; the *femme fatale*, the exquisite Whore of Babylon in the Angers tapestry of the Apocalypse, for instance, looks at herself in Venus' mirror and combs out her long yellow hair; Botticelli's Venus wears nothing but her yellow hair; Mary Magdalene, as in the sculpture *"la belle Allemande,"* a German statue of the sixteenth century, veils herself—partly—in her abundant gilded tresses. Beauty remains blond, as in Tiepolo's voluptuous allegories. Cinderella has inherited, as the mark of her perfect loveliness, this characteristic of Venus. A musical version (c. 1889) set in Merrie England, by Francis Davies, invokes Cinderella's appearance:

> A maiden meek, and young, and fair;
> Her eyes were blue as flower o' lint,
> Her cheeks the roses' bonniest tint,
> And streamed in golden waves her hair.

The Ladybird version of 1963 begins, "Once upon a time there was a lovely young girl called Cinderella. She had long golden hair, and eyelashes that turned up like the petals of a daisy, and the tiniest dancing feet ever seen." Cinderella is blond, though her hair style changes according to the fashion of the day—in 1966, she wore the long fringe and bouffant height of Brigitte Bardot.

Although blondness's primary associations are with love, with lovableness, with erotic attraction, as in the example of Venus, the Angers Whore of Babylon and Mary Magdalene, it is also the color of virgins' hair, like the sign Virgo, from a twelfth-century English Psalter. Sometimes, too, the Virgin Mary herself, the "Woman clothed with the sun," is blond. Even Black Madonnas have golden hair, as at Montserrat, where it is gilded under her wimple. Saint Dympna is represented blond; so are Catherine, Agnes, Barbara, even in dark-haired Italy. Saint Lucy, who tore out her eyes when a lover admired them and sent them to him saying her preferred heavenly bridegroom had no need of eyes of the flesh, has hair of gold in her reliquary in Syracuse in Sicily, where she is buried. Blondness, with its associations with imperishable gold, wholesome sunshine, the light rather than the dark, is also the sign of

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virtue. Naked truth is also fair, as in Botticelli's *The Calumny of Apelles*. Cinderella's stepsisters, in Walt Disney, are red-haired and dark respectively.

Joan of Arc's hair color is not known, although for a long time it was thought that the single dark strand under a seal on one of her extant letters might have been from her head. But her haircut is famous: it was "cut round in the fashion of a boy," they charged repeatedly during her trial. However, the pressure of received ideas lies so powerfully on the imagination that illustrators of Joan's story ignored the primary and well-disseminated historical evidence. In an *image d'Épinal* from 1894, printed for mass distribution to celebrate her new status as the Venerable Joan, Joan of Arc's story is told in strip form, and she appears, in the last frame, at the stake. The phrase *image d'Épinal* has come to mean *cliché* in French—and in this image, quite properly, the cliché Joan of Arc has long blond hair, like a medieval virgin martyr.

The erasure from her familiar story of several attested features—her rebellion, her father's murderous anger, her boy's short hair—helped to mold Joan of Arc into a more acceptable heroine of the church; in this, her historiography corresponds to the loss of certain elements in the Cinderella cycle of folk tales. When they are intended for a reading rather than a listening public and aimed at children especially, they no longer seem suitable material and undergo alteration in order to edify and instruct. The cautionary tale of Blonda, an *image d'Épinal* from the turn of the century reprinted as an American cartoon strip, illustrates the metamorphosis of the wronged daughter. Set in a medieval countryside, with a shift to a sixteenth-century palace, Blonda draws on the illusory authenticity of a fictive past; and by creating a heroine who belongs to fairy tale and to pious literature, the story is intended to provide a lesson for its contemporary, youthful audience.

Blonda's fairy godmother, whose name is Caprice, grants the beautiful young girl every wish, but warns her that for each one, she will lose a hair of her head. Blonda is wicked and asks only for riches and vanities, luxuries and follies, till she hasn't a hair on her head. Then she repents and begins to do good. Her hair grows back, one strand at a time. She works hard at home at household tasks. The

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medieval cauldron, a must in the life of a Cinderella, makes its reappearance. At last she regains her lost glory; one day, when she takes off her cap, she sees that her hair has grown as heavy and long and blond as it was before. So she marries a nice boy and grows up in wisdom and kindness: a naughty beauty who has learned to keep her golden hair for a covering.

In the period of oral storytelling, many tales circulated about the excessive claims of paternal duty and the wrongs of daughters. In these stories, the heroines rebelled and were justified in their rebellion, because their father suffered from an unnatural and carnal passion, or because they had pledged themselves to what was then considered a higher way, the way of chastity in the Christian faith. Their principal recourse became disguise, sometimes accompanied by self-imposed degradation and even self-mutilation. Finally vindicated, even triumphant, they either married a prince charming of their own choice on this earth, or were united with the heavenly bridegroom in martyrdom, *sub specie aeternitatis*. In some of the fairy tales, the legends and the historical case of Joan of Arc, the heroine's life usually falls into two distinct segments, and she is not reconciled with her past, the home of her upbringing, nor is she reproached for abandoning it. These medieval narratives, with their interest in the strains and problems of young women on the threshold of the mature erotic life, these tales about a longed-for escape from an ordained fate, have proved unpalatable, and in the medievalizing fiction, disseminated as children's morality tales in the last century and in this one, the heroine's virtue requires that she be represented according to the conventions of maidenly modesty and filial duty. Her good behavior earns her a reward: beauty, sex appeal, the very desirability the stories used to dramatize as so painful and problematic. The alteration of her appearance follows upon her taking charge of her own wishes; but in Blonda, the change is represented openly as punitive. In Blonda's baldness, we find the *derogatory* equivalent of Cinderella's rags, Donkeyskin's hide, the She-Bear's animal metamorphosis, Rushen Coatie's coat of grass. Blonda regains her loveliness only by giving up "Caprice" and returning to

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the fold. In this nineteenth-century inversion of a type of ancient story, the heroine is crowned with the outward sign of her return to obedience, the garland of her new-found conformity to the requirements of good conduct: the blond hair of the goddess of love.

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